(c) if not, the details of the steps taken by Government to release adolescent prisons below sixteen years who crossed over the border by mistake?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) During the Foreign Secretary level meeting in December 2004, it was *inter-alia* agreed that: immediate notification would be provided to the respective High Commissions through the Foreign Ministries of arrested Pakistani/Indian nationals; Consular access would be provided to all prisoners within three months of apprehension; repatriation would be done immediately after completion of sentence and nationality varification; a mechanism would be introduced for early repatriation, without sentencing of inadvertent crossers and a similar mechanism would be established for early release, without sentencing of those under 16 apprehended by either side.

Achievement of SAARC

1754. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have opted out of the SAARC summit;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether countries of South Asia do not have a common security doctrine and perceive the SAARC as a vehicle to countervail India;

(d) if so, the Government's reaction thereon and the steps taken to do this manoeuvering; and

(e) how for the purpose of setting up this organisation has been achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Member States of SAARC do not have a common security doctrine. Some member countries have tended on occasion to perceive SAARC as a vehicle primarily to countervail India.

(d) and (e) Government supports the objectives of SAARC which was established to promote economic, social and cultural cooperation as well as mutual understanding and strengthen collective self-reliance among the peoples of South Asia. Since its inception in 1985, SAARC has contributed to greater understanding, accommodation and information flow, which has led, first to a preferential trading arrangement (SAPTA), and subsequently to the signing of a Framework Agreement for free trade (SAFTA), currently under negotiation with a view to bringing it into force from January 1, 2006. The Social Charter and conventions signed on issues such as trade, food security, terrorism, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, preventing and combating trafficking in women and children for prostitution, and promotion of child welfare in South Asia offer instruments for Member States to formulate programmes and implement joint strategies in these key areas. People-to-people contact has also increased with NGOs and civil society playing a dynamic and incremental role in nurturing cooperation and activating ideas on economic, cultural, social and development objectives.

Meeting of Nepalese King with Indian Envoy

1755. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that King Gyanendra of Nepal, who has recently seized direct control of Nepal, has met envoys of key nations including India and U.S.;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the nature of talk he had with our envoy in Kathmandu;

(c) whether Government have decided to stop military aid to Nepal after the recent events; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Ambassador in Nepal had an audience with King Gyanendra on February 9, 2005. During the meeting, the Ambasador urged a return to democratic processes in Nepal at the earliest. He emphasized